

MR. DARGAN, THE IRISH CONTRACTOR.—Mr. Dargan has recently made his name generally known in England by his munificent proceedings in respect of the approaching Industrial Exhibition in Dublin. In Ireland it has long been recognised as that of the most enterprising and successful of contractors, frightened by no difficulties, and prepared for any emergency. As we heard one of his countrymen say when we were in Ireland,—"Bedad, he'd bridge the elements, if you'd find the money." The following is from *Lloyd's Newspaper*:—"William Dargan is a self-made man. He was originally a common labourer, and had he only risen to be a carpenter or a stonemason, his friends might have said that he had succeeded in life. But he had a Saxon heart in his Celtic breast, and working his way steadily, soberly, from point to point, making every inch of his road good as he travelled over it, he advanced from bricklayer to builder—from workman to master—from cottage jobs and repairs to contracts for public buildings. He had attained this position before the railway system rose up,—and he, the self-taught man, had won for himself an honourable place among the intellectual and money aristocracy of Dublin. Well, there was a *soirée* given one night at a distinguished house in the Irish capital, when railways became a topic of conversation; and a person present suggested a line between Dublin and Kingstown. Very good: but where was the money to be got? What would it cost? One sum was named—another was hazarded. But what a difference between them! The idea was about to die out in a laugh, when the first speaker said, 'Here's a man who will tell us in a moment. Here, Dargan: yours is the head for a calculation! What would a line of rails to Kingstown cost?' Tablets were out, and a pencil writing down a few hurried figures. In two minutes a result was announced—so low as to astonish every one present; and it was then agreed to meet next day and consider the project. The company was formed, the Act of Parliament obtained, and in due time tenders for the contract were invited. It was the first bit of railway in Ireland, and there were no Brasseys and Petos in the sister country. Most of the tenders were ridiculously high; but William Dargan sent in the same rough draft as he exhibited at Lady ———'s *soirée*, and got the contract. That work laid the foundation of his fortune, and from that hour the self-made man has been the soul of railway enterprise in Ireland."

THE LIVERPOOL ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—At the opening meeting of the season, on the 12th, Mr. Verels, the president, entered into a review of the principal architectural works in the county which had been commenced in the present year. Turning next to the contemplated improvements in Liverpool, he said he should like to know what was intended to be done with the space once occupied by the Islington Market, and, if that bideous St. John's Church were removed, which he said would be an eyesore as long as it remained, suggested that the whole extent of ground might be made into an exceedingly beautiful place, where the people of Liverpool might take their walks. Mr. Picton made some observations upon the proposed town improvements. Mr. J. H. Horner read a paper on the society's late excursion to Manchester, with critical remarks on the various architectural objects which they had inspected. A short discussion followed, after which Mr. Chantrell exhibited an improved hollow brick, intended for wall facings.

VALUE OF LAND AT BIRMINGHAM.—The increased value of land in the centre of this town, consequent upon the alterations for railway purposes, may be judged of from the following list of prices, realised on Wednesday in last week, at a sale at the Union Inn, by Messrs. Cheesbire and Gibson, of the surplus lands in High-street and Moor-street, belonging to the London and North-Western Railway:—Lot 1, having a frontage of 15 feet to High-street, and adjoining the land purchased by Mr. Partridge at the last sale, brought 12l. 12s. 6d. per yard (121 yards,

1,527l. 12s. 6d.). Lot 2, back land, forming part of the site of the Swan Hotel, brought 5l. (300 yards, 1,500l.). Lot 3, situated on the opposite side of High-street, having a frontage thereto of 38 feet, with the shops Nos. 22 and 23, and some other buildings, brought 12l. 15s. (305 yards, 2,613l. 15s.). Lot 4, adjoining the last, with a frontage of 15 feet, brought 9l. 10s. (105 yards, 1,026l.). Lot 5, a similar piece, 11l. 7s. 6d. (127 yards, 1,444l. 12s. 6d.). Lot 6, having a frontage to High-street of 16 feet, and to an intended carriage-way of 60 feet, 13l. 10s. (93 yards, 1,120l. 10s.). Lot 7, frontage of 83 feet to High-street, with similar privileges as the last, and having retail shops, Nos. 17 and 18, on it, 10l. 17s. 6d. (324 yards, 3,523l. 10s.). Lot 8, Mr. Burbridge's shop, with the Lion and Lamb public-house, and spare land, 12l. 2s. 6d. (365 yards, 4,425l. 12s. 6d.). The Moor-street land realised from 3l. to 4l. per yard. The average price of the High-street land, excluding the back piece, was 11l. 16s. 1½d. per yard: the sixth lot was sold at the rate of 65,340l. per acre.—*Birmingham Gazette*.

NEW NATIONAL GALLERY.—We have reason to know that instructions have been issued from the Foreign Office to some of our ministers abroad, and probably to all of them in Europe, directing them to obtain plans and details of the several galleries of pictures, their modes of lighting, arrangement, &c. This is a prudent proceeding, and betokens that the subject is likely to be properly considered. Instead of beginning by determining the architecture and position of the building, sacrificing it to this or that shape of the ground, to a portico on one side, to the line of a street on the other, to harracks in the back, to passages unconnected with the object of the building, &c. making no provisions for increase,—in fact, taking into consideration every point but the one essential, namely, the fitness of the building itself to receive and exhibit pictures,—these prudent inquiries indicate that the arrangement of the pictures and the modes of showing them are, properly, to be the first consideration. The mistakes of the present building ought to be entirely avoided, and we should begin upon a totally different principle. The first thing is to settle what a National Gallery ought to be and become; to provide ample space for this; to make the structure strictly subordinate to the use, and then to allow the architecture to develop itself out of the use and nature of the edifice. It seems to us that the proper course is that the authorities should prepare a ground plan and block model, showing the absolute and indispensable arrangements, size of rooms, size of windows, position of windows, and then invite architects to improve the artistic features if they desire to do so. The past experience of competitions, in which every point of principle is left open, ought to make us wiser when we begin to erect a new National Gallery.—*Times*.

METAL FOR BUILDING PURPOSES.—The patent of Messrs. Morewood and Rogers, of Upper Thames-street, for shaping, coating, and applying sheet metal to building purposes, has now been specified. The first of these improvements consists in causing sheets of iron, or other metal, intended for corrugating, to be rolled of unequal thickness in different parts. The second consists in corrugating sheets of metal diagonally, allowance being made in cutting the sheets for distortion. The third has relation to the application of corrugated sheet metal to roofing, and consists in causing the corrugations to run diagonally, and in placing the wooden rolls, when used, in the same position. The fourth consists of a mode of applying a thick coating of lead, or its alloys, to sheets of zinc or alloys of that metal. For this purpose a mould is used, in which the metal to be coated is placed, and the whole is then immersed in melted lead, or the mould and zinc plate are heated, and the lead poured on to the required depth.

GUILDHALL, WESTMINSTER.—Mr. Serjt. Adams complains loudly of bad arrangements, defective hearing, &c. since the recent alterations in this court. Perhaps some inquiry into this matter might prevent future mistakes of the kind.

ELECTRO-TELEGRAPHIC PROGRESS.—It is proposed to carry the telegraph under Southampton Water to the lake of Wight and the Royal residence at Osborne.—A third submarine line is being thrown across the Irish Channel. The two former, as our readers are aware, were not successful attempts, and a report of the failure of this third endeavour has been published, but has since been contradicted. This last is being laid between Portpatrick and Donaghadee, for the Magnetic Telegraph Company, by Messrs. Newall and Co. wire-rope manufacturers. A telegraph is being fixed (the posts are already up), along the side of the river Aron, from Bristol, down as far as Pill. It is to signal the shipping as it appears at the mouth of the river, instead of sending a special messenger to the town.

BURY AND WEST SURREY ARCHÆOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.—The nineteenth general quarterly meeting of this Institute was held on Thursday week, Lord Jermyn, M.P. in the chair. Alluding to the extensive excavations now in progress at Pevensey, in Sussex—the *Anderida* of the Romans—under the direction of Mr. Roach Smith, one of the honorary members of this Institute, and of Mr. M. A. Lower,—his lordship observed that these gentlemen had invited the members to witness their operations, which are more extensive and satisfactory in their results than anything hitherto explored in this country. Various presents were announced and articles exhibited, after which the members visited the monastic ruins in the vicinity of their place of meeting, together with the Angel Hall, formerly called the Minstow and the Bury Fair, &c.

SHEFFIELD SCHOOL OF DESIGN.—The annual meeting of the friends of this institution, at the distribution of prizes, &c. took place on Tuesday last, when the Duke of Newcastle delivered a lengthened address to a large assemblage, including many of the gentry, clergy, and nobility of the district. In the course of his address, his lordship, who presided, very truly remarked that in the highest walks of life there is a want of that amount of education in art which shall enable them to appreciate what is excellent, and to purchase what is good and beautiful instead of that which is vicious and ugly. "I do not mean by this," added his lordship, "that they are all to become pupils in these different schools of design, although I do think that there are many who live within the circuit of these schools who would do well to enlist themselves and their children in them."

PERIL FROM RESERVOIR: HOLMFIRTH, NO WARNING.—Will it be credited that at Holm Styes, near Holmfirth, numerous families are said to continue in the utmost state of excitement during every wet day or night, in consequence of the insufficiency of the embankment of the reservoir at the head of their valley or gorge, which is declared by the *Halifax Guardian* to be quite as dilapidated and insecure as was the one at Bilberry; and that although a comparatively small sum would suffice to diminish the danger, those who have authority in the matter still persist in a system of neglect which so perils the lives of residents that they fly to the adjoining high grounds on every fall of rain a little heavier than usual, and quite lately had to proceed in a body to the reservoir and compel those interested to draw off a superfluous quantity of water which it was feared the embankment in its present dilapidated condition would not stand? There is something villainous in conduct such as this.

ROAD-MAKERS' DIFFERENCES.—The following are tenders for making roads and laying stone-ware pipe sewers upon the "Blythe-field Estate," near Forest Hill Station, Kent, for the Church of England Freehold Land Society. Mr. G. Lawford, architect:—

Coker	£680
Barues	627
Murray	560
Kemester	525
Kelley and Co.	482
Brown	450
Thompson	444
Becks (accepted)	430—2.